

**This Week in Congress**

*October 3, 2005*

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

**Natural Disaster Must Not Become Financial Disaster**

This week Congress passed a resolution to continue funding federal government programs through November 18, 2005. This gives the House and Senate more time to complete 2006 funding legislation.

I believe that our nation is at a crossroads following the unprecedented devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Congress has already provided \$65 billion in disaster assistance - a record level - but Members of Congress seem determined to pass on the burden to pay for this necessary relief to future generations rather than tightening the federal government's belt now.

I have called on my colleagues in Congress to adopt a one-year moratorium on all 2006 legislative earmarks. This is estimated to save taxpayers \$27 billion. I have also sponsored legislation to postpone for two years the Medicare prescription drug benefit, except for seniors with the highest financial need. This delay of the full implementation will save taxpayers billions of dollars.

I have no doubt that Americans will come together and recover from the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina. Congress and the Administration must now step up and work together to ensure the financial future of America does not become another victim of this disaster.

For the full text of an editorial I wrote on this issue, please visit: [http://www.house.gov/apps/lis/t/hearing/ks01\\_moran/oped092605NaturalFinancialDisaster.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/lis/t/hearing/ks01_moran/oped092605NaturalFinancialDisaster.html)

**Congressman Tom DeLay Steps Aside and New Majority Leader Elected**

This week House Majority Leader Tom Delay (TX-22) was indicted by a Texas grand jury. In accordance with the rules of the House Republican Conference, Congressman DeLay has stepped down from his leadership position. In a meeting of Members of Congress, Majority Whip Roy Blunt (MO-7) has been appointed to temporarily fulfill the responsibilities of Majority Leader. The outcome of the case against Congressman Delay is now in the hands of our judicial system.

### **Testifying at the Ways and Means Committee on the Japanese Beef Embargo**

This week I testified before the House Ways and Means Committee about the economic harm that U.S. farmers, ranchers, processors and retailers have experienced because of the Japanese embargo on American beef. The hearing focused on a number of unfair Japanese trading practices. I was the sole Member of Congress to testify before the committee and highlighted the importance of beef exports.

Losing our annual \$1.7 billion export market to Japan is harming our entire beef industry, and it also puts our well-established bilateral trade relationship at risk. Whether you are a farmer or rancher, a beef processor or retailer, the loss of this market is having a detrimental effect on rural communities and our agriculture economy.

Japan has prohibited beef imports from the U.S. since December 2003, when a single case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) was found in a Canadian-born dairy cow. Since that time, there have only been two cases of BSE in this country compared to 20 BSE cases in Japan. The U.S. has undertaken a rigorous and thorough surveillance program for BSE testing since the first case was discovered and has implemented extensive safeguards to protect human and animal health.

In March, I introduced a resolution calling for sanctions to be used immediately against Japan if it fails to abide by its October 2004 agreement to reopen its border. The hearing this week was a necessary step in bringing this resolution to a vote in the House and showing Japan the serious nature of this trade issue. This week, I also led an effort of more than 100 Members of Congress calling on President Bush to make restoring Japanese market access for U.S. beef his highest economic priority with Japan.

Despite our government's efforts, the Japanese continue to unjustifiably delay the process of resuming trade, basing their decisions on factors not grounded in science or consumer safety. While I do not wish for the U.S. and Japan to enter into a drawn out trade dispute, the reality is Japan must uphold its trade agreements. The U.S. cannot be satisfied with the status quo.

### **Chairing Agriculture Subcommittee Hearing on the State of the Farm Economy**

Also this week I chaired a hearing of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management to review the state of the farm economy and the effect of federal policy on agriculture. With the dramatic increases in energy prices, farmers and ranchers have been burdened in recent months with the stress of significant increases in input costs.

Kansas farmers have few options. They feed the world, but also have to feed their families. With ever-increasing energy prices, we need to ensure they can continue to do both.

Panel members testified about the future of the farm economy, taking into account the significant increase of farm input prices such as fuel, fertilizer and other services requiring petroleum-based products. Among those testifying were Keith Collins, Chief Economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Sam Funk, Administrator of the Kansas State University Farm Management Association Program.

Mr. Funk's testimony indicated that the impact of higher fuel and oil, irrigation energy and fertilizer prices will increase costs in 2005 by approximately \$8 to \$10 per acre for farms in Kansas.

This hearing was a great opportunity to further educate Members from more urban areas

about difficult times on farms as Congress considers disaster assistance, budget cuts and a new farm bill.

### **Efforts to Keep Meth Out of the U.S. Discussed at Congressional Summit**

The battle against methamphetamine in Kansas communities continues. This week I met with representatives from the Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, Drug Enforcement Administration and the Office of National Drug Control Policy to discuss additional national efforts to keep meth out of the U.S. The discussion was part of a Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine summit.

The U.S. has had significant success in reducing the availability of domestically manufactured meth; however, about two-thirds of meth used in the U.S. is now produced in Mexico. This means, once again, that we need better border control and tougher law enforcement along our borders. It is also a reminder that while we are reducing domestic production of meth, we are seeing an increase in the importation of meth. It is all the more reason we must emphasize education, treatment and rehabilitation.

### **Learning About Kansas Energy at Sunflower Electric Power Plant**

As part of my recent appointment to the Congressional Gas Price Task Force and in a continuing effort to learn more about the production of energy in Kansas, I toured the Holcomb site of Sunflower Electric this week. Carol Meyer and Steve Dyer with the Garden City Chamber of Commerce joined me for a tour of the facility.

During the visit, we discussed the value of wind energy and its role in meeting the country's energy needs, as well as the issue of natural gas versus coal fire generation for electricity.

This plant is of great economic value to Finney County. Two additional plants are also being added, which will further boost the economy of southwest Kansas and help bring down energy prices with additional energy produced here at home.

### **Promoting Gun Safety in Abilene**

Monday I joined Dickinson County law enforcement officials in Abilene to continue advocating for the use of gun locks and promoting gun safety through Project ChildSafe. An important reminder to gun owners is that safely securing firearms can prevent tragic accidents. Gun locks are a simple and important way to keep homes safe. Through Project ChildSafe, Kansas was

provided with 155,000 locks in 2005. Locks are available at local law enforcement agencies in all 105 Kansas counties. Visit your local law enforcement agency to receive your own free gun lock and help keep your home safe.

### **Community Visits and Fort Hays State University Homecoming**

I visited Scott City this week and enjoyed visiting with community members around town. With many feedyards across the county, I talked with residents about the need for continuing efforts to reopen the beef market with Japan.

I also visited the community of Delphos where I met with residents at the library, bank, grain elevator, post office and City Hall. I learned about the community's effort to keep the grocery store going in this small town. I also stopped by the local insurance agency to discuss crop insurance and visited with Mayor Derrell Steinbrock about finding new business prospects for the community.

Fort Hays State University celebrated its annual homecoming this weekend. I attended the alumni and endowment awards reception and congratulated award recipients Bill Havice, Katrina Hess, Donald Kaufman, Robert Orr and LaNette Schmeidler Parker. I also participated in the parade and attended the Fort Hays State University versus Colorado School of Mines football game.



### **In the Office**

In my office this week representing Kansas Family, Career and Community Leaders of America was Michael Smith of Goodland to discuss funding for career and technical education in high schools and colleges. Rick Reed and Randy Watson of McPherson, Dan Yonk and Roger Reitz of Manhattan and Lynn Stanley of Topeka were in to talk about civic education.

Distie Profit of Shawnee Mission was in to discuss health information technology. Ronald Walker, Lamont Godsey, Kay Schmidt and Major Colleen Wright of Junction City were in to discuss Geary County schools and the expansion of Fort Riley. Tom Brungardt of Milford and Pam Taverner of Wichita were in representing the National Education Association to talk about the response to Katrina.

Kay Mitchell of Hill City and Donna Veatch of Kansas City were in to discuss Head Start reauthorization. Karen Seaberg of Atchison was in to talk about Lewis and Clark activities in Kansas. In representing the National Auto Dealers Association was Dale Willey of Lawrence.

Lucas Maddy of Norton spent a day shadowing me in my Washington, D.C., office in order to learn more about the operations of a congressional office. Maddy is in Washington, D.C., for an internship with the Department of Agriculture in the White House Liaison office.

In my office this week for tours of the Capitol building were Stella Riney of Haven; Vida Yutzy of South Hutchinson; Gloria Hall of Hutchinson; Donna Brunin of Rossville with her son, Derek; Paul and Patricia McNutt of Concordia; and David and Julie Holmes of Hutchinson.

In from Hays were Irma Pilatus with her son and daughter-in-law, Dave and Doris Pilatus, and her daughter, Debbie Crawford of Alexandria, Virginia. Marge and Ted Mintun of Salina, Marvin and Janis Platner of Canton, Don and Alice Goscha of Norton and Ken and Kay Peterson of Cyprus, California, were also in for tours.

Very truly yours,

Jerry